SOCIALIST STUDIES . . . . .

No 6.

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OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF
THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

Communications to:
71 Ashbourne Court,
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London N12 8SB

CHALLENGE TO THE ANARCHO SOCIALIST PARTY

In a previous article (The Anarcho Socialist Party and the State) in Socialist Studies No.5, we claimed that members of the Socialist Party of Clapham were producing and writing in an anarchist journal called 'Spanner' and that the organisation generally had moved towards the Anarchist position of advocating 'the immediate abolition of the State'. The Clapham party subsequently organised a weekend school for 4th July 1992 on the subject of 'Libertarian Socialism', another name for Anarchism. The organisers of the school are members of the Spanner group of anarchists, who are also members of the Clapham Party. In support of our view we point out that the May 1992 **Socialist Standard** in answer to a correspondent, informs readers that the workers outside of Parliament, and not the M.P.s, will establish Socialism. This can only mean that the workers will dispossess the capitalists by direct action and that they will be organised for this purpose. The form of these organisations is not given, nor is it stated whether they are political or economic or whether they are separate from the main political organisation, which alone is specifically designed for the conquest of political power national and local. The reply says that Parliament will be regarded as a 'passive instrument', which means that the machinery of government will have no part to play in the abolition of capitalism.

Again this is the anarchist position and it is also a repudiation of the class struggle as the only way to achieve political power for Socialism. There is no point in obtaining political power unless it can be used as an agent in the transformation of society. This distinguishes the Socialist from the anarchist utopian.

These are serious allegations and call for a reply from the Clapham party. A few years ago such allegations would have been fiercely rejected and the authors of such an attack would have been challenged to defend their position in public debate. Yet we have not heard a whisper from these erstwhile gladiators who until quite recently have been throwing out challenges to debate like confetti. The Greens, the Gays, the Blacks and various shades of the self styled 'left' have all had their turn. All have been soft targets. But when it comes to serious opposition the fearless Socialist Party runs away. No longer is its platform in Hyde Park (incidentally bearing the name of the 'Socialist Party of Great Britain') open to

opponents to state a case against it. It is becoming increasingly obvious that this organisation is in a very confused and contradictory position. On the one hand it has to pay lip service to its Declaration of Principles in order to placate its blinkered membership and on the other it wants to broaden the basis of its propaganda and attract those individuals who think Socialism is a great idea but do not understand its implications or the organised discipline necessary for its achievement.

Our platform indoor and out is open to all opponents including the Socialist Party. We are prepared to debate and discuss any aspect of our case and to address any political group or T.U. branch because we have nothing to hide. Can the Socialist Party make the same claim whilst denying its platform to opponents, and refusing to debate its case in public? The answer is no. Although the Socialist Party of Great Britain was reconstituted over a year ago the Clapham party pretends that we do not exist. The fact that we have an active and virile membership is positive proof that you cannot kill an idea.

CHALLENGE TO DEBATE

On the 13th July last, we wrote to the Socialist Party at Clapham, Challenging them to debate the question...

"Which Party upholds the Principles of Socialism ?".

We have just received their reply. Our letter was considered by their E.C. on 8th August, and the following resolution was passed:-

"That C. May be written to, asking who elected him General Secretary of the Socialist Party of Great Britain."

How silly can they get?

We shall keep you advised of developments.

Our 1992/93 Lecture series will commence
Sunday 25th October 1992 at
Marchmont Community Centre,
62 Marchmont Street, London WC1

POLITICAL WRITING: ARGUMENT OR RHETORIC ?

Writing on politics is difficult and does not come easily without practice. Studying how Marx presented his arguments is a good place to begin, his lectures, particularly **Wages, Price and Profit** is a case in point. So too is the **Communist Manifesto** written in collaboration with Frederick Engels. A range of techniques are also available, use of facts and statistics to underline the argument; internal coherence within the text and a clear idea of the person who is likely to read the piece. After all, a Socialist's objective is to persuade the working class to accept the case for Socialism through the force and validity of the argument. Poor writing, incorrect facts and erroneous arguments are likely to have the opposite effect.

Most, if not all political writing suffers precisely this problem. Their political writing is either aimed at academics and students or at the discontented with a presumed antipathy towards Socialist theory and political analysis. The writing is politically confused and confusing. The result is like the aim of a darts player after the eighth pint of lager; way off target. Circulation figures drop; branches have a high turnover of membership and the writing becomes more unintelligible or banal.

Worse still are those writers on the Left who try to mimic their supposed readership. They believe that by playing to the gallery their writing will become more 'street credible', 'topical' or 'fashionable'. The shallow pretentiousness of such writing is clear to the intelligent reader and is quite rightly ignored with contempt. So too is the use of abuse and the inclusion of monotonous, unimaginative and vulgar adjectives. Moralising, appeals to the emotion rather than to reason, aggressive rhetoric, bombastic statements and assertions likewise have little or no effect. The desperate use of crude and witless cartoons only highlights the poverty of the written word it accompanies. One of the great merits of Marx's own writings is that it contains no cartoons.

Such politically illiterate writing, to be found regularly in **The Socialist, Socialist Worker, Socialist Standard** and other self styled Left Wing Journals supporting either a new-ruling class or reforms whilst misleadingly claiming to represent the interests of the working-class partly explains why so few workers buy such

magazines. Who can blame them. When, out of curiosity they do purchase one they feel cheated and insulted by the poor and often patronising language they find inside. More so when most of the writers in these journals are academics who deceitfully use one rhetorical discourse for their students and fellow intellectuals who they feel can deal with theory and employ another rhetoric in their 'vox populi' pieces they churn out for the consumption of the masses who, they believe, are incapable of grasping any idea beyond the pay packet.

This deceitful arrogance is in contradistinction to Marx and to The Socialist Party of Great Britain (SPGB). **Das Kapital,** like the Object and Declaration of Principles of the SPGB was written for members of the working-class as a whole to study and not for a specific target group. Marx's writings on Capitalism and the case for Socialism put forward by the SPGB are well within the intellectual grasp of an open-minded worker. They are grounded in the class struggle and the class interests of the working-class.

Marx's wish to have workers reading **Capital** is borne out in a letter to Maurice Lachatre cited in the preface of the French edition of **Capital** where he applauds the publisher's idea of printing the book in serial form. Marx concludes;

In this form the book will be more accessible to the working-class, a consideration which to me outweighs everything else. (p 31c).

This follows from Marx's political theory that the emancipation of the working-class must be the work of that class. Marx did not consider workers to be unable to grasp theory. He saw the working-class in a positive, optimistic light; a class who will want to learn about Capitalism in order to abolish it.

Marx also sees his reader as someone

"who is willing to learn something new and therefore to think for himself. (p 19)."

Such readers drew up the Object and Declaration of Principles when they founded the Socialist Party of Great Britain. They did so without the assistance of academic leaders, nor were they seduced by patronising prose or cartoons. They were workers who thought

for themselves in line with their own class interests.

In Marx, Socialist writing has a great tradition to draw from. After all he wrote on behalf of our class. Marx's scientific exposition in capital of the laws and contradictions imposed upon capitalist production and exchange is littered with literary and classical allusions. Marx did not despise literature or poetry like so many anarchists who feel guilt-ridden if they enjoy any artifact found within capitalism. He used both to illustrate his writings. His favourite past-time was to read Aeschylus in the original Greek.

Marx also uses wit and satire to good effect. None more so when he deals with Parson Malthus, whose theory of population was a 'slur on Mankind' In a note to the chapter on the General Law of Capitalist Accumulation he writes;

Although Malthus was a parson of the English State Church, he had taken the monastic vow of celibacy.....this circumstance favourably distinguishes Malthus from the other Protestant parsons who have shuffled off the command enjoining celibacy of the priesthood and have taken 'Be fruitful and multiply', as their special biblical mission in such a degree that they generally contribute to the increase in population to a really unbecoming extent, whilst they preach at the same time to the labourers the 'principle of population' CAPITAL VOL.I. p.578

In a different context this observation can be applied to Left-Wing writers whose preachings to the working-class have an equally detrimental effect on Socialist ideas and the propagation of Socialism. Were these so called Left Wing writers to become metaphorical Malthusians and adopt literary celibacy they would be doing Socialists and the Working-Class a great service.

"SOCIALIST OPPOSITION TO SOCIALIST PROPAGANDA"

On the 20th October 1991 we proposed to begin our series of winter lectures with a meeting at Marchmont Street Community Centre, London WC1 - our regular venue. The title was to be 'The Rise and Fall of the Socialist Party'. This referred to the Clapham High Street Party some of whose members had decided that they no longer wished to remain part of our organisation i.e.; The Socialist Party of Great Britain. Our object was to show that not only had this group abandoned Socialist principles but were also hostile to Socialist progaganda being carried out by the Socialist Party of Great Britain. In a circular issued by S. Coleman (1991 Central organiser) with the permission of the executive committee we were described as 'political oafs'. A few days before the meeting was due to take place the hall management cancelled the meeting. They informed us that they had received a letter on Socialist Party of Great Britain headed paper from the Central Organiser claiming that we had no right to hold a meeting as our branch was under suspension and had no right to use the name Socialist Party of Great Britain. This was untrue and misleading. The Clapham organisation severed their connection with us in May 1991 by purporting to expel us from their organisation known as the Socialist Party, an organisation of which we were never members.

At first the hall management decided to take no action, but during the course of a subsequent telephone conversation the Central Organiser stated that members of his organisation would be justified in taking over the meeting and running it in their name. In the circumstances the hall management, feeling that some disorder might occur, decided to cancel the meeting. On the day some 35 people turned up including a member of the Socialist Party from Glasgow, who were unaware that the meeting had been cancelled. It subsequently took place at the Conway Hall with an audience of 56.

When the E.C. of the Socialist Party dealt with the matter they endorsed the action of the Central Organiser. They also refused to publish in E.C. minutes a resolution from their East London Branch criticising his action, on the ground that the resolution was libelous. It was only published some months later when the individual concerned gave his consent and withdrew his threat of libel action. The fact that such a situation can arise in an organisation which

prides itself on free and unfettered discussion makes nonsense of democratic procedures, stifles criticism and inhibits free speech.

Another example of the Socialist Party's opposition and hostility to our propaganda was their action in writing to **The Guardian** complaining about our advertisements appearing in the paper and urging the editor not to publish them. They claimed that the title Socialist Party of Great Britain legally belonged to themselves. This is utter nonsense; firstly there is no legal registration of political parties. Secondly, the name Socialist Party of Great Britain is inseparable from its principles. The name by itself means nothing. This caricature of a Socialist Party, as previously stated, was formed by a rump of activists who by their actions have demonstrated clearly that they are opposed to both the name of the S.P.G.B. and its principles.

Due to the apathy and indifference and sheer inertia of the majority of the inactive membership they were able to gain control of the E.C and Annual Conference. In this way they either ignored or circumvented the rules of the party and its procedures. The standing orders of the party were flouted and resolutions were carried at conferences which were clearly out of order because they conflicted with the Declaration of Principles. For example the 1988 Conference carried a resolution which claimed two names; 'Socialist Party of Great Britain' and 'Socialist Party'. 'Socialist Party of Great Britain' was to be used for legal purposes. Their monumental hypocrisy and sham concern about their 'legal' name was clearly exposed in the 1992 General Election Campaign. Mr. Headicar, their candidate, deliberately avoided any association with the S.P.G.B. He signed the official nomination paper in the name of the Socialist Party. Why did they not use their full name? A general election is precisely the occasion when you do use your full name for 'legal' purposes.

We suspect that they do not want to be associated with the S.P.G.B.'s Principles to which they are opposed. Rather than put the case for Socialism honestly as outlined in the Principles (an understanding of which is absolutely essential for the working class to achieve Socialism) they practise the deception that Socialism can be obtained without a class conscious working class. In this they find themselves in opposition to the Socialist Party of Great Britain which stresses the need for working class understanding. The Socialist Party's policy would seem to be to admit to member-

ship anyone who is sentimentally attached to the word 'socialism' whether they understand it or not.

The hostility of the Clapham organisation toward the S.P.G.B. can only be explained by the collapse of their plots to shut us down. Despite a long campaign to kill us off we continue to exist. Hence the frustration of the plotters. Like the proverbial ostrich, on the one hand they pretend we do not exist, and on the other hand they accuse us of seeking to 'wreck' their organisation. But why should we bother? The process of decay is already well advanced. The divisions between the social democrats and the anarchists within the organisation are beginning to surface. They now speak of 'black', 'gay' and 'feminist' issues, hallmarks of the whole rag bag of reformist trivia. There are still some genuine socialists within the Socialist Party. Some simply do not believe that the organisation is no longer the one they joined with its honesty and integrity, and have formed an attachment based on long association. Others are sitting on the fence hoping that things will change for the better. However, these members must realise that the party they joined no longer agrees with its Principles and is no longer based on the class struggle.

Those who control the Clapham organisation have long argued strongly for changing the name to 'Socialist Party' but quite inconsistently they also (by Conference resolution) claim 'The Socialist Party of Great Britain' as an additional name. Could it be that the real purpose of the latter is to be able to qualify for bequests from members and sympathisers made out in favour of 'The Socialist Party of Great Britain'. In effect obtaining money under the false pretext that they are carrying on the propaganda of the S.P.G.B. The Clapham party now calls itself 'Socialist Party' for the benefit of the living and 'Socialist Party of Great Britain' for the betrayal of the dead.

LETTER FROM CANADA

Comrade Ahrens from Vancouver has sent a letter, parts of which we reproduce below. His reference to 'Standards' means the **Socialist Standard** and 'Clapham 52' means the Socialist Party at 52 Clapham High Street:

"In checking past Standards and recent pamphlets I noticed my red question marks but I did nothing about it. I should have paid more attention, been more critical and active."

"Somewhere along the line there will have to be a socialist awakening at Clapham 52, and elsewhere..... "Ego compensation" used to be called "personality clashes", the old trick and habit for sweeping issues under the carpet. Clapham 52 is much more sophisticated. They don't answer my letters, but I'm learning from a party that flies two political flags blowing in opposite directions, at the same time. What motivation do you think lies behind all this?....."

"I have a problem -- everyone sees political democracy in some form or another around them -- and I don't. My good friend and Comrade, Sam Leight writes, (and I quote him), "democracy for socialism" -- "democratic institutions are vital for the establishment of socialism" -- "the working class in democratic countries", and I can't see political democracy in any form – not even in Clapham 52 where for so many years I thought it was."

"I see a different picture -- a parliament forged into a tool by socialists to dispossess the capitalists, and dismantle capitalism."

"When socialists gain control of the state political apparatus they will be working through the parliamentary institution of capitalism which is NOT a democratic institution. They had better make sure they know all the existing parliamentary voting tricks and that a healthy majority of the working class backs them up. And the working class had better make sure that when the means of life are transferred over to them (by the socialists in power) they will be able to introduce a socialist society through their own electoral machinery planned and organised before and during the take over."

"Its only at the tail end of capitalism and the beginning of a socialist

society that I see democracy in any form. I could have said all this in a few simple words because to me -- Socialism and Democracy are synonymous -- and that the working class can really only win once. I am sure you have heard all this before and tell me where I have erred?"

"In the wilderness of capitalism a socialist party should and must be a microcosm in the socialist macrocosm. Shame on 52. ....."

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

NORTH WEST LONDON BRANCH meets on the 1st and 3rd Mondays in the month.
7.30 pm Abbey Community Centre, Belsize Road, NW6.
Secretary C. May, 71 Ashbourne Court, Woodside Park Road, London N12 8SB

CAMDEN / BLOOMSBURY BRANCH meets on the 4th Tuesday of month.
6 pm Marchmont Community Centre, 62 Marchmont Street, WC1
Correspondence to the Secretary, S.P.G.B., 31 Caernarvon Road, Eynsbury, St. Neots, Cambs. PE19 2RN

All meetings are open to the public and visitors are welcome. Those wishing to find out more about the Party and its activities should contact the Secretary.

REPLY TO LETTER FROM S.LEIGHT, ARIZONA

S.Leight claims in a letter that our description of the journal **Discussion Bulletin** (America) as an 'anarchist journal' is inaccurate. It is, he claims, a discussion journal for all points of view which relate to Socialism, or at least claim to. He wants us to publish a retraction because inter alia he has had 3 letters published in the May/June issue.

The references to D.B. were in our No.5 issue of **Socialist Studies** and appeared in two articles (1) The Anarcho Socialist Party and The State, and (2) Principles or Opportunism, Socialism or Left Wing Libertarianism. These articles made very serious criticisms of the so called Socialist Party of Clapham and produced evidence to support those criticisms. S. Leight was, and still regards himself as, an international member of that organisation. Neither S. Leight nor the Socialist Party has replied to those criticisms although they were partly based on information derived from D.B. with which S. Leight is familiar.

Instead, he chooses to raise the irrelevant and piffling issue of whether or not D.B. is an 'anarchist journal' -- a red herring which would side track the real issues which are those contained in the two articles. We do not say that this was deliberate, but this intervention by S. Leight gives us some idea of what he considers an important issue. He has also overlooked the fact that two 'anarchist journals' were mentioned in the **Socialist Studies** articles. The other journal is called Spanner which is produced by a member of the Clapham Socialist Party and the members of the core group are likewise Socialist Party members. **Spanner** calls itself 'Libertarian Socialist'; it rejects the class struggle, which means it cannot be a revolutionary Socialist Journal. Spanner wants to form workers co-operatives, a reactionary and obsolete 19th century concept opposed by the S.P.G.B.

S. Leight knows all this having read it in D.B. No.45 issue. He presumably also read all the rubbish about De leon and industrial unionism. Also the anarchist article on Anti State, Anti market by L. Otter. What does he do? He does not do what a Socialist should do, which is set out in the rule book of the Socialist Party of Clapham. He does not write in opposition to the views put forward by anarchists and other opponents of the S.P.G.B. He does not attack

the fallacious and harmful ideas which form the bulk of the content of this Discussion Bulletin as is the clear duty of every socialist. He did not respond to the bitter and disloyal attacks on sound members of the S.P.G.B. in the article. 'What is Sectarianism?' written by a member of the Clapham party and endorsed by his branch. Instead S. Leight attacks us for calling a journal 'anarchist' which is largely full of anarchist De Leonist, syndicalist, situationist etc. etc. articles. Has S. Leight forgotten the Hostility Clause ?

Nowhere in the three letters that he has had published is there stated the vital and focal point of our propaganda : ie. the need for the working class to organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the machinery of government. This marks the difference between ourselves and the philosophical sentimental utopian 'socialism' of the 'liberal democracy' who together with 'anarchist humanitarians' and the others who think "Socialism" is a good idea but reject the only method by which it can be achieved. That is through the class struggle and Parliament. S. Leight should as a matter of urgency, start a campaign to clear the anarchists out of the Clapham Socialist Party which they at present control. That is where his priorities should be.

FURTHER LITERATURE AVAILABLE

Socialist Studies nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, & 5
Turmoil in Russia (leaflet).
Available on receipt of large s.a.e.

Questions of the Day pamphlet:-
No.1. Inflation: Cause and Effects ?
No.2. Unemployment and Recessions.
No.3. Marx - Modern History and Economics.
(25p each, post paid)

A MEMBER'S LETTER TO THE GUARDIAN

(unpublished)

May 22nd 1992

Dear Sir,

I read with interest your editorial 'Missy in a mist' (22nd May 1992) in which you express the Liberal virtue of Free Comment in the Guardian by offering advertising space 'to legal clients presenting arguments and services'. you support this claim by pointing to the way in which you allow both pro- and anti-abortion groups space to air their conflicting views.

However, you do not seem to extend this Libertarian policy to Political Parties, when without reason, your Advertising department stopped advertisements appearing by the Socialist Party of Great Britain opposing the Clapham based Socialist Party. Since the latter do not have any legal standing in law to the full name of the Party and chose to be known by their current title do you not think there is a contradiction to be resolved by yourselves between opposing the Irish State's denial of free comment on the one hand and denying a Political Party advertising their opinions in the newspaper on the other?

MARXIAN CLASSICS

Wage labour and Capital
Wages Price and Profit
Socialism Utopian and Scientific

There are a number of cassette tapes available of various lectures together with questions and discussion. Subjects include; Recession, Trade Unions, Pollution, William Morris, Daniel De Leon and several others. For details please contact Branch Secretary.

A YEAR ON

It was on June 11th 1991 that members of Camden/Bloomsbury and North West London Branches who had been expelled from the Clapham Organisation, decided to re-constitute The Socialist Party of Great Britain, retaining the object and Declaration of Principles as laid down in 1904, as the guide lines for future activity. And in that 12 months we have continued to propagate the ideas of Socialism despite numerous attempts by Clapham to spike our guns. Threats to sabotage our meetings; letters to the Guardian saying they should not accept our adverts (and the Guardian went along with their request); lies and misleading statements. We have survived them all.

During the year we have continued to hold lectures of a theoretical nature, and others on current affairs. A Spring School went well, although attendance suffered from our choosing the wettest Saturday of the year, and the Organisers being unaware that it was Cup Final Day! However, members and visitors from as far afield as Plymouth, Bristol and Buckingham enjoyed 4 very good lectures and also an excellent buffet lunch. Outdoor meetings are held regularly in Hyde Park, with the usual bunch of moronic hecklers, and so far the Clapham Party, true to their concern for 'free-speech and democracy', have refused our speakers the opportunity to take their platform for a short period to enable us to state our case as to why we oppose them.

We have published four issues of Socialist Studies and 2 sections of what will eventually be our pamphlet - Questions of the Day. Several hundred copies of a leaflet on Russia and 2½ thousand leaflets during the General Election were distributed.

So far from being the 'geriatric armchair philosophers' as dubbed by Clapham, we have been out and about, and will continue to do so.

Applications for membership will be welcomed, and a growing membership will ensure even more propaganda in our second year.

POLITICAL ACTION AND THE MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT

The Socialist position regarding the state is quite simple; that there will be no state in Socialist society. The state is an instrument of coercion indispensable in a class divided social system with its consequent class struggle between the capitalist exploiters and the exploited working class.

Socialism, on the contrary, will be a society of free men and women in which production and distribution takes place to meet human needs, where social interests will be harmonious and conflict free and where disagreements will be resolved democratically. In such circumstances the necessity for any form of coercion will be meaningless. You cannot coerce voluntary labour and nor can you coerce voluntary participation in the affairs of an open society.

Socialist theory on the State derives in part from the writings of Marx and Engels who argued for workers to take political action to establish Socialism. They both resisted the argument put forward by Anarchists like Bukharin that the State must first be Abolished. However, Social Revolution - the abolition of classes - is a precondition for the State's disappearance. The object for Socialists in taking political action has always been Socialism - not the abolition of the State. The State exists because of Capitalism and class rule and not the other way round. Marx, in the Communist Manifesto says... 'The Executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the affairs of the whole Bourgeoisie...' It logically follows that when the Bourgeoisie, or Capitalist class, and the system they represent has been abolished then so will the state.

*That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic. (Clause 6, D. of P.).
However, with the establishment of Socialism, ie, the declaration of Common Property and Democratic Control and the unimpeded

ability for Socialist production and distribution to take place over the globe is the machinery of Government 'immediately abolished' as the anarchists have it? Now the state machinery has aspects which will be useful to a socialist society like the Fire and Ambulance Services; Postal and Health Services etc. These are secondary issues about the state machinery. Of more importance is the coercive forces - Army, Navy, Air Force, Police, Prison Services etc. These are really the Machinery of Government referred to in Clause 6 of the Declaration of Principles, which states that these mechanisms will be converted from an instrument of oppression into an agent of emancipation. It is the contention of the S.P.G.B. that they are not 'immediately abolished'. Agency is an active concept not a passive one. It performs a role and a function.

Currently these coercive instruments are controlled by Parliament. This is why we urge workers to take political action as a conscious socialist majority in order to democratically gain political power. This is achieved by sending Socialist delegates to Parliament to form a majority there in order to take control of the machinery of Government. It is not a minor detail in the Socialist Revolution but intrinsic to it. This is because it is not until the political power is captured by a socialist working class that the machinery of government, including the armed forces, may be converted into the agent of emancipation.

But what will happen to the instruments, that according to Clause 6, have now become the agents of emancipation? The Socialist Party of Great Britain has been clear and consistent on this matter. In the pamphlet 'Declaration of principles (1934 edition) we read:

"When they have possession of the instrument (Parliament) they will have control of the armed forces and will be in a position to proceed to the abolition of private property etc."

In the same pamphlet (1975 edition) it was stated;

"The State, with its coercive machinery will be dismantled as its function - the custodian of private property will have disappeared."

In the October 1937 edition of the **Socialist Standard**, published by the old S.P.G.B, in a reply to a reader's question, the Editorial Committee writes;

The S.P.G.B. agrees with Marx and Engels that, with the disappearance of classes, there 'also disappears the necessity for the power of armed oppression or state power'.'(Letter to Van Patten, on April 18th, 1883)'. The state will, therefore, in due course, 'wither away'.

and they go on to quote Engels approvingly;

"State Interference in social relations becomes in one domain after another superfluous, and then dies out of itself; the government of persons is replaced by the administration of things, and by the conduct of the processes of production. The state is not 'abolished' it dies out". (Engels "Socialism, Utopian and Scientific" Ch.III)

Whilst in the SS of August 1955, the Executive Committee of the old S.P.G.B. writes as follows;

"Should a violent minority attempt to destroy Socialism they should have to be forcibly dealt with. While at full liberty to advocate a return to Capitalism, no violent minority could be allowed to obstruct the will of the majority. Hence the phrase in the 6th clause."

and concludes;

"There will be no suppression of speech, opinion, or peaceful organisation."

In the 1978 statement on violence, adopted by the old S.P.G.B. before it was taken over by an anarchist minority, the Socialist position on the State and the machinery of government was reaffirmed;

"After the process of establishing Socialism has been completed... the state machinery including the armed forces, will have passed out of the control of the capitalists and come under social control; Socialists will constitute a majority in all occupations in which the working class predominate - in production, transport, communications, police and armed forces."

and goes on to state in relation to Clause 6 of the D. of P.:

"In the period of changeover, control of the armed forces would be continued for as long as necessary in the light of conditions then existing. It has never been the Party's case that simultaneously with gaining control the armed forces would at once be wholly dismantled, In Engels words 'The State is not abolished. It dies out'.

The S.P.G.B. has always taken a practical view on the question of the State. Force will be used against a violent minority if necessary and the question of the speed of dismantlement of the machinery of Government dealt with by the people at the time. How then can the anarchists in the Clapham based Socialist Party knowingly revise and distort the established practices of the S.P.G.B to claim that once Socialism is established the state will be 'immediately abolished' only they can tell us. In the meantime their pamphlet **'Is a third world war inevitable' (1982)** has this to say;

"In the event of a minority trying to violently disrupt the plans of the majority, SOCIALIST SOCIETY should have to defend itself. Socialists are not pacifists but simply do not advocate violence unless it is absolutely necessary to defend the democratic will of the majority. (p17)"

If the above is to be read in conjunction with their call for the 'immediate abolition of the state' with what are future socialists to defend themselves? And the Clapham crowd's intellectual leadership lecture us on our supposed "Confusion" It should first look to its own.

While of course socialists will be prepared for all eventualities including the possibility of some form of forcible resistance, it seems to us probable that by that stage the inevitability of the change to Socialism will be so obvious that the minority opposed to change will know that they have to accept what the great majority of society is determined to bring about.

THE WAR

AND THE SOCIALIST POSITION

WHEREAS the capitalists of Europe have quarrelled over the questions of the control of trade routes and the world's markets, and are endeavouring to exploit the political ignorance and blind passions of the working class of their respective countries in order to induce the said workers to take up arms in what is solely their masters' quarrel, and

WHEREAS further, the pseudo-Socialists and Labour "leaders" of this country, in common with their fellows on the Continent, have again betrayed the working-class position, either through their ignorance of it, their cowardice, or worse, and are assisting the master class in utilising this thieves' quarrel to confuse the minds of the workers and turn their attention from the Class Struggle,

THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain seizes the opportunity of re-affirming the Socialist position, which is as follows:

> That Society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.
>
> That in Society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a CLASS WAR, between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.
>
> That the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exist only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers.

These armed forces, therefore, will only be set in motion to further the interests of the class who control them-the master class-and as workers' interests are not bound up in the struggle for markets wherein their masters may dispose of the wealth they have stolen from them (the workers), but in the struggle to end the system under which they are robbed, they are not concerned with the

present European struggle, which is already known as the "BUSINESS" war, for it is their masters' interests which are involved, and not their own.

THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain, pledges itself to keep the issue clear by expounding the CLASS STRUGGLE, and whilst placing on record its abhorrence of this latest manifestation of the callous, sordid and mercenary nature of the international capitalist class, and declaring that no interests are at stake, justifying the shedding a single drop of working-class blood, enters its emphatic protest against the brutal and bloody butchers of our brothers of this and other lands, who are being used as food for cannon abroad while suffering and starvation are the lot of their fellows at home.

Having no quarrel with the working class of any country, we extend to our fellow workers of all lands the expression of our goodwill and Socialist fraternity, and pledge ourselves to work for the overthrow of capitalism and the triumph of Socialism.

THE WORLD FOR THE WORKERS !

August 25th 1914. The Executive Committee.